UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1954
10 August 1995

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council demands Croatian Government cease all military actions and respect rights of local Serb population; condemns attacks on United Nations personnel and demands those responsible be brought to justice.

* Security Council expresses concern at reports of grave violations of international humanitarian law in Srebrenica; demands Bosnian Serbs permit ICRC access to all detainees.

* Serbs stream out of Krajina region as cease-fire continues to hold; Croat harassment of refugees ends after Special Representative meets with Government official.

* Chairman of Special Commission welcomes Iraqi declaration on biological weapons programme, but sees shortcomings and contradictions in it.

* Secretary-General reports no progress towards resolving Georgian/Abkhaz conflict; appoints resident deputy to Special Envoy to assist efforts aimed at comprehensive settlement.

* Under-Secretary-General Ji says international community must focus more attention on public administration and management.

* * *

The Security Council today strongly deplored the broad military offensive launched by the Croatian Government on 4 August and demanded an immediate cessation of all military actions. The Council demanded that the Government: respect fully the rights of the local Serb population, including the right to remain, leave or return in safety; allow access to that population by international humanitarian organizations; and create conditions conducive to the return of persons who had left their homes. It took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 1009 (1995).

The Council strongly condemned the unacceptable acts by Croatian Government forces against United Nations personnel, including those which had resulted in the deaths of one Danish and two Czech peace-keepers. It demanded that the

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Government fully respect the status of United Nations personnel, refrain from attacks against them and bring to justice those responsible for such attacks.

The Council urged the parties and others concerned to exercise maximum restraint in and around Sector East and requested the Secretary-General to keep the situation there under review. Reiterating its call for a negotiated settlement, it urged the Croatian Government to resume talks under the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. It requested the Secretary-General to report within three weeks on the implementation of today's resolution and on the implications of the situation for the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO).

* * *

In a second meeting today, the Council expressed deep concern at reports of grave violations of international humanitarian law in and around Srebrenica and at the fact that many of the area's former inhabitants could not be accounted for. It also expressed concern at the plight of civilians and other persons protected under international humanitarian law originating in the Zepa area.

By unanimously adopting resolution 1010 (1995), the Council demanded that the Bosnian Serbs allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international agencies immediate access to persons displaced from Srebrenica and Zepa. It also demanded that the Bosnian Serbs permit ICRC representatives to visit and register any persons detained against their will, including any members of the Bosnian Army.

The Council demanded that the Bosnian Serbs fully respect the rights of all detainees and urged that they be released. It reiterated that all those who committed violations of international humanitarian law would be held individually responsible for them.

The Permanent Representative of the United States, Madeleine Albright, told the Council that some 10,000 civilians from Srebrenica and 3,000 from Zepa were missing and unaccounted for. Some were missing, some were in detention, and some were most certainly dead. People had been beaten, raped and murdered on the instruction of the Bosnian Serb leadership, she said.

* * *

The cease-fire agreement between the Croatian Government and the Croatian Serbs continued to hold today, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said a steady stream of refugees and disarmed soldiers was leaving the Krajina region for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) via the Zagreb-Belgrade highway. However, Croats last night harassed Serbs in Sisak as they

made their way to the highway. Some people were reportedly dragged from their cars and beaten, and one woman bled to death from wounds to the head.

Special Representative Yasushi Akashi met with a senior Croatian Government official this morning to ask for more effective efforts to maintain order, and no further incidents were reported during the day, the spokesman continued. Mr. Akashi also called for greater freedom of movement for United Nations personnel throughout the conflict area, especially around Knin. Meanwhile, some 5,000 Serbs had reached Sector East via the main highway this morning. As many of 50,000 might have reached Serbia by different routes, while 50,000 more were passing through Serb-controlled parts of Bosnia. Another 25,000 Serbs were thought to be waiting to leave Sector North by the highway.

* * *

The Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission, Rolf Ekeus, today welcomed Iraq's declaration that it had developed biological weapons, but said there were certain shortcomings in it. He told correspondents at Headquarters that Iraq had recently admitted to having produced biological warfare agents before 1991. However, it had not produced evidence to support the claim that those agents had been destroyed.

Mr. Ekeus said the fact that Iraq had denied the existence of its biological weapons programme more than four years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) created a "credibility problem". There were also apparent contradictions in the declaration. Iraq now claimed to have ended its biological programme at a time when it was developing missiles for chemical weapons. In addition, it had not admitted developing systems to deliver biological agents. Furthermore, at least five metric tons of biological growth media had not been accounted for.

Iraq wanted the Security Council to immediately implement paragraph 22 of resolution 687 (1991), thus lifting the oil embargo against it, and was threatening to end its cooperation with the Special Commission, Mr. Ekeus continued. He said that the Commission needed time to verify the declaration, and added that Iraq "shouldn't slam the door when we are so close to the end".

* * *

There has been no progress towards resolving the Georgian/Abkhaz conflict, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report dated 7 August, he said both sides continued to take positions that could not be bridged: the Georgian side believed that it had made as many concessions of principle as it could, whereas the Abkhaz side believed its position had been consistent from the beginning and was unwilling to change.

(more)

Pursuing a political solution to the conflict required appropriate support and resources, the Secretary-General continued. He had thus decided to appoint a resident deputy to the Special Envoy to assist him in achieving a comprehensive settlement based on three essential elements: the safe and early return of refugees and internally displaced persons; maintenance of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia; and a special status for Abkhazia.

* * *

The international community should focus more attention on public administration, including management issues, the Under-Secretary-General for Development Support and Management Services, Chaozhu Ji, said today. He made that comment in a briefing on the work of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance. The Group is currently meeting at Headquarters to lay the groundwork for the 1996 resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on making governments work better.

The Group of Experts sought to heighten international awareness of the key role of public administration in development, Mr. Ji continued. Better public administration facilitated progress towards market-oriented economies, helped countries deal with globalization and created an enabling environment for the development of the private sector. The Group also sought to strengthen the United Nations system's role in capacity-building and to tailor country-specific approaches to public administration.

Mr. Ji added that the resumption of the General Assembly's fiftieth session should be seen in the context of the continuum of world conferences organized by the United Nations. Follow-up to those conferences was primarily the responsibility of Member States, and public administration cut across all the issues dealt with by them.

The Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance comprises more than 50 experts from financial institutions and governmental and non-governmental organizations. Their recommendations will be reviewed at a resumed session of the Economic and Social Council later this year, and will serve as a basis of a report by the Secretary-General.

* *** *